

# Midwestern Stories

 [digitalresearch.bsu.edu/immersive-learning-showcase-2021/exhibits/show/midwestern-stories](https://digitalresearch.bsu.edu/immersive-learning-showcase-2021/exhibits/show/midwestern-stories)

## Midwestern Stories

Midwestern Stories is a two-course series that has taken place in the Department of English in the fall and spring semesters of 2020-21. It has focused on student investigation of representations of Midwestern identity in various types of media. Indiana Humanities' One State/One Story novel pick for 2020, Jean Thompson's *The Year We Left Home*, has been central to Midwestern Stories' thematic core. The novel engages and challenges popular narratives of the Midwest, including 1) that of a past in which agriculture and industry thrived and people were fulfilled by their participation in building America and 2) that of the contemporary Midwest as a stagnant milieu with little to offer the next generation. Paralleling these two popular narratives of the Midwest, the first course of Midwestern Stories focused on representations of the Midwestern past while the second focuses on the Midwestern present.

### Midwestern Stories: Complicating the Mythic Landscapes of Farm and Factory

Students in the first course gained an expanded view of the agricultural and industrial Midwestern past and explored the kinds of stories that are left out of the popular idealization of farm and factory in the American imagination through the study of contemporary Midwestern novels. To learn about the experiences of real Midwesterners in past decades, students in the first course conducted an oral history project, interviewing older Midwesterners willing to share their recollections of life in the Midwest of the 1940s, 50s, 60s, 70s, 80s, and 90s. Based on these interviews, students worked together to compose and record a podcast that was then produced by the university's Digital Corps. In nine episodes, the *Stories from the Heartland* podcast shares the stories of older folks from the often-mythologized middle of the country to challenge misconceptions and expand understanding of the Midwestern past.

### Midwestern Stories: Constructing Our Contemporary Identity

The second course shifted students' attention from the past to the present, focusing on representations of the contemporary Midwest in a variety of cultural texts. Through conversations with numerous guest speakers from multiple disciplines, students learned about the diverse experience of living in the Midwest and considered the stakes of employing a regional perspective. Students then worked alongside staff at Minnetrista Cultural Center in Muncie to develop a museum exhibit focused on Midwestern identity. Through a series of stories, the exhibit invites visitors to take a fresh look at a familiar space, exploring the complex landscape that is alternately celebrated as America's Heartland and derided as "Flyover Country." In addition to the Minnetrista lobby exhibit, students created a digital

version of the “Midwestern Stories.” Web content includes expanded explorations of stories shared in the physical exhibit, full access to the oral history podcasts developed in the first course and book reviews.

A photograph of a Midwestern landscape featuring a winding dirt road through golden-brown fields. The sky is dark and dramatic, with a hint of light breaking through the clouds. The overall mood is serene and evocative of rural life.

# Midwestern Stories

Exhibit Panel Slideshow

Exhibit presented at Minnetrista

April 23<sup>rd</sup> to July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021



# About Our Exhibit: Who Was Involved? What Did We Do? Who Are We?

## ABOUT THE EXHIBIT

**Midwestern Stories invites visitors to take a fresh look at a familiar space, exploring the complex landscape that is alternately celebrated as America's "Heartland" and derided as "Flyover Country." The exhibit's focus on individual stories reflects an awareness that the Midwest is host to a great variety of people and experiences that resist broad characterizations.**

The students who created this exhibit were part of a spring 2021 course at Ball State University entitled "Midwestern Stories: Constructing Our Contemporary Identity," taught by Dr. Kathryn Ludwig. In preparation for exhibit development, students engaged a variety of contemporary texts, including literature and television shows, and conversed with faculty from multiple disciplines to learn about Midwestern history, culture and demographics. In addition to the Minnetrista lobby exhibit, students created a website, which provides extended versions of stories shared in the physical panels and reviews of contemporary literary works by Midwestern writers.

The website also provides access to the podcast series created by students in Dr. Andrea Wolfe's fall 2020 course, "Midwestern Stories: Complicating the Mythic Landscapes of Farm and Factory." Students in this course studied the agricultural and industrial Midwestern past and explored the kinds of stories that are left out of the popular idealization of farm and factory in the American imagination through the study of contemporary Midwestern novels. The podcast series, *Stories from the Heartland*, presents accounts from Midwesterners from the 1930s-90s.

The projects to come out of the two-course series, the podcast and this exhibit, were funded by a grant from Indiana Humanities, through the "One State, One Story" Campus Read program, and by a Ball State University Provost Immersive Learning Grant. We also offer our sincere thanks to everyone who supported student learning during this project, including all of our interviewees, Ball State faculty and library staff who generously shared their expertise with us, those at the Digital Corps who helped with design and production on both projects, and our mentors at Minnetrista, George Buss, Jessica Jenkins and Nalleli Guillen.

### Student exhibit creators:

Jerret Barker  
Charleston Bowles  
Emma Cieslik  
Becca Clanton  
Haleigh DeGrow (intern)  
Andrea Eads (graduate student)  
Hayley Hines  
Sarah Morrow  
Max Rinehart  
Cara Walsh  
Andria Weyrich  
Demi Wilhelm



BALL STATE  
UNIVERSITY



## HOW DO YOU DEFINE “MIDWEST”?

A Place

An Idea

Shared Experience

People

### CAST YOUR VOTE IN THE GLASS CONTAINERS BELOW!

If you chose...

**PLACE** Head to the kiosk on your left!

**AN IDEA** Head to the kiosk on your left!

**SHARED EXPERIENCE** Head to the kiosk on your right!

**PEOPLE** Head to the panels on the back wall of the lobby or on the rear side of the stone column!



# Opening Interactive: Engaging All Visitors in Our Fundamental Question

# Made in the Midwest: Agriculture and Industry in the Rust Belt

## MADE IN THE MIDWEST

Innovative individuals and hardworking families have invested in Midwestern agriculture and industry for generations.



Images Langdon and draft horses, image courtesy of Matt Langdon

### LANGDON BROTHERS SEED

Langdon Brothers Seed Company has deep roots in Hartford City, Indiana. The original ag business firm was owned by George Washington Langdon when he came home from the Civil War. It was the son, Robert, inherited the farm and specialized in raising Belgian draft horses for pulling farm equipment. Robert's son, Bob, was a student in high school when, in 1936, he planted the first hybrid seed corn and raised it for use on their farm. When his brother, Ted, got out of the army, the brothers joined forces to create Langdon Brothers Seed Company, which sells agricultural seed (soy, corn, sorghum, soybeans, wheat, cotton, alfalfa, etc.). Today, Bob and Ted's sons continue to employ members of the Langdon family. Ted's grandson, Matt Langdon, says of company's lineage, "There are still family farms, where there's a father and son or a father and employee, it's still looked at as a family. Even as farms have gotten bigger, we're still tied to the land. In the Midwest the farmer lives in the middle of his work and we're one of the last businesses that's where we're raising our families and future generations."

### JENNERJAHN MACHINE

In 1959, Brian Jennerjahn built his first custom-drawn machine in a rented building they built, a one-acre barn. Brian Jennerjahn Machine, located in Matthews, Indiana, employs forty-eight people and has machines in twenty-one countries. Brian, by an engineer in JM's customers paper, Brian was converted to start his own company by his fascination with machines. His son, Chris Jennerjahn, says, "My dad loved driving a car, I think he started Jennerjahn Machine to make a ton of money, but instead to be fulfilled. And maybe there's one of a lot of successful entrepreneurs. I like working with machines and I love the idea of making them here." In the early days, Brian and his wife, Ruth, ran the company out of their garage. The company's breakout moment came in 1984 when it sold its first machine to National Cash Register, which was the largest supplier of cash registers in the country. It is in use, Chris, came on board as a mechanical engineer in 1995 and of Brian's son, Chris, as president. Chris and his brother, Kevin, bought the company in 2011. Chris says, "When I reflect on the period of the company, what I am most grateful for is the talent and work ethic of the people we've had over the years. I think there's a Midwestern work ethic that has made us successful."



Jennerjahn early days, Brian Jennerjahn pictured on the right, image courtesy of Chris Jennerjahn

# INDUSTRY TO ARTISTRY

All over the Midwest like-minded residents are working to revitalize their cities and create a sense of pride within their communities.



Matchbox Coworking Studio in Lafayette, IN is another example of a disused industrial space turned makerspace. Source: [matchboxstudio.org](http://matchboxstudio.org)



## MAKERSPACES

Deindustrialization in the Midwest resulted in abandoned buildings and a sense of decline within communities all over the region. In the heart of downtown Muncie, Indiana, stands one such building that has been reclaimed by the community. The former CINTAS warehouse is now known as Matchbox, a place where makers of many different crafts work alongside each other. The makerspace holds a variety of individuals who practice woodworking, pottery, art, and even taxidermy. Makerspaces like this one bring together individuals all striving to reach the community through the use of STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, and math). Matchbox is one example of Midwesterners recapturing the creative spirit that drove the early industrial age and reconceptualizing once forgotten spaces.

# Makerspaces and Murals: Reclaiming Midwestern Spaces

This mural depicts the folklore that surrounded Henry Holtgrewe, a 1904 baseball player who was once thought of as the strongest man. This mural was created in the heart of the Cincinnati community as a way to honor both Henry Holtgrewe and his descendants who still call Cincinnati home today. Located at 121.5th Street, Cincinnati, OH 45202. Project managers: Emily Howard and Brian Hildebrandt. Designer: Jason Shell. Multitude of youth apprentices. Source: [www.artworkscincinnati.org](http://www.artworkscincinnati.org)

## MURALS

Like makers, artists in many post-industrial communities are creatively reclaiming disused and blighted spaces. Cincinnati's ArtWorks Mural Program had this purpose in mind when it started its challenge to create murals in each of its fifty-two neighborhoods. Murals ranging from trompe l'oeil to symbolism have transformed empty city walls and businesses throughout the region. The program not only served to employ hundreds of professional artists and youth apprentices but also brought neighbors together to allow the community to collaborate and plan the story their murals would tell.

*"Murals are uplifting, inspirational, hopeful. They transform a wall, and the story behind the mural transforms our understanding of our city, its history and its people."* JUDY BAUSCHER



# Farming Takes Center Stage: Farm Aid and the Midwestern Farm Crisis



Left: Crowd at Farm Aid Concert. Source: Paul Mattkin  
Right: Farm for sale as a result of the farm crisis. Source: David Peterson

To the rest of the nation, agriculture is the defining characteristic of the Midwest. In the 1980s, however, America's "Breadbasket" faced hardships largely missing from widespread media attention.

On a rainy September day in 1985, 80,000 people gathered around a Champaign, Illinois stage. The Beach Boys, Ben Jovi, Johnny Cash, and dozens of others performed. Memorable moments from the show include Tim Penty and The Heartbreakers backing Bob Dylan, B.B. King changing a guitar string mid-song, and Carole King's performance of "You've Got a Friend." This was Farm Aid, a benefit concert organized by Neil Young, Willie Nelson, and John Mellencamp to bring attention to struggling Midwestern farmers.

In the 1980s, high interest rates, overproduction, a U.S. retaliatory grain embargo against the Soviet Union wreaked havoc on the agriculture industry. By 1984 farm debt had reached \$215 billion, causing farms owned for generations to be sold or foreclosed. While monetary donations at Farm Aid were short of expectations, \$9 million was raised for America's farmers. "If nothing else," John Mellencamp stated, "forget the money. We are here for awareness."

The effects of the 1980s farm crisis can still be felt. Small-town Midwestern life changed forever, with towns across the region losing banks, stores, and schools. A generation of farmers relocated for better opportunities. Along with advances in farming technology, the farm crisis expedited a shift from small family farms to larger farming operations. Over 30 years later, Farm Aid continues to raise awareness and funds for independent family farms.



*"This old house of ours  
is built on dreams,  
And a businessman  
don't know what that means.  
There's a garden outside  
she works in every day,  
And tomorrow morning  
a man from the bank's  
Gonna come  
and take it all away" –*

"This Old House," Neil Young, Farm Aid 1985



# HOME

## IN THE HEARTLAND

The Midwest is a dynamic and diverse place to live.

Famously considered a predominantly rural part of the country, the Midwest is also home to large metropolitan areas such as Chicago, Detroit, and Minneapolis, as well as countless small towns. The cities and towns of the Midwest emerged first as agricultural centers and later expanded around factories during the second period of industrialization that took place in the U.S. from the late 1800s to early 1900s. In the last fifty years,

Midwestern life has evolved in response to deindustrialization, shifts in farming methods, and the emergence of digital communications. Today, its diversity in culture, population, and landscape make the Midwest a region where any kind of community can still be found.

### STORIES FROM THE HEARTLAND PODCAST:

The experiences voiced here come from the *Stories from the Heartland* podcast series, which you can access in full on our website at [www.midwesternstories.com](http://www.midwesternstories.com). The podcasts were recorded by Dr. Andrea Wolf's students in the first course of the Midwestern Stories series, and produced by Ball State University's Digital Corps. Students interviewed Midwesterners about life in the 1930s through 90s. The result is a podcast that shares the stories from the often-mythologized middle of the country.

#### URBAN

*"So, if my mother needed something... everything was within like a block or two or three. So, you really didn't need to drive cause everything was there for you."*  
—Arlene Sobol



Source: Ken Land

#### SUBURBAN

*"We would play outside as soon as it was daylight. And you wouldn't come in until you heard your mom holler for dinner and then you would go back outside and play until she bollered. And it was bedtime."—Kendra Wood*



Source: HayGrunewald

#### RURAL

*"When my father was injured badly... our crop was ready to come in. And so one day we were sitting on the front porch and here comes all the farmers from around with their equipment and brought in all of our crops in one day."—Bonnie Spencer*



Source: Dan Graham

#### SMALL TOWN:

*"Every Friday and Saturday night, we would go cruise the square in Bloomfield, literally all of our cars and some of us would park on the south side, some of the park on the west side and then we'd go through and we'd scream out the windows."—Jim Blackmore*



# Home in the Heartland: Midwest as a Place

# Midwest in the Media: Pawnee, Hawkins and More!

Ideas about "Middle America" exist in large part thanks to the stories shared about the Midwest on screen.

## MIDWEST IN THE MEDIA



Source: Chris Weston | Kaitlyn Bohannon, BBC

Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin all saw an increase in voters under 18 during the 2020 election. Source: Lorien Shaul



### REPRESENTATIONS OF MIDWESTERNERS IN THE NEWS

Every four years around election time, national media outlets often push a homogenous narrative about the Midwest as an inherently middle-class, conservative, rural area, white. However, if you look closer into the underrepresented voices of the region, you will find that the story on the election is up for grabs to tell the whole story. Many young Midwesterners

are committed to complicating the national narrative and they are making the media's head, both through successful social media and traditional outlets. While national media coverage of the Midwest often uses "partisan journalism" to tell Midwestern stories, listening to the voices of young Midwesterners might just change the dominant narrative.

### REPRESENTATIONS OF MIDWESTERNERS IN ENTERTAINMENT

Two of the most influential representations of the Midwest on screen today are the Netflix series *Stranger Things* and NBC's *Parks and Recreation*. Both of these shows acknowledge and complicate stereotypical representations of the Midwest. *Stranger Things* takes viewers back to the 1980s through its nostalgic references to '80s television, images of kids on bikes and summer games of *Dungeons & Dragons* to represent its suburban nostalgia. But *Stranger Things* exposes the dark underbelly of a sleepy Midwestern town through supernatural and occult layers. NBC's *Parks and Recreation* by contrast, confronts us with so-called realism. In fact, you'd be hard-pressed to find a more sincere and realistic character than the protagonist, Leslie Knope. Leslie is a perfect representation of "Midwestern Nice." As she grapples with whether she belongs to "Goon Dances" or "Bad Pawnee," viewers are faced with the Midwest's own good and bad potential.

# BLACK VOICES

## RING OUT WITH TRUTH

Racial tension and  
social change in the Midwest

### SAVING OUR LIVES, HEAR OUR TRUTH

Sixteen years ago in Chicago's Uptown, Illinois, Dr. Ruth Nixon Brown created a space in which Black girls were invited to express themselves creatively through storytelling and art in the expression. This was the first SOL.HOT, a youth organization whose name stands for "Saving Our Lives, Hear Our Truth," and whose mission is to celebrate Black girlhood. Brown explains, "So much of SOL.HOT is collective organizing, and that's deeply informed by my experience growing up in the Midwest." Brown and Nixon are joined by the youth activists of Chicago, Brown's plan in founding SOL.HOT was to create the art of creating and maintaining community, which had been modeled for her by her family. In contrast to youth empowerment programs that carry an implicit objective of transforming Black girls, SOL.HOT is about celebrating who Black girls are without a program of race-to-face contact and earned trust. Today, SOL.HOT has expanded to other locations in the Midwest and beyond, including Brown's own hometown of Chicago Heights.



*"In every SOL.HOT space, we are about respecting Black girls' positions, honoring their ideas, accepting their experiences, and doing something to hold space where we can be together as we desire."* —VERONICA JEN



# Black Voices Ring Out With Truth: Racial Tension and Social Change Experienced by Black People of Color in the Midwest

### "I CAN'T BREATHE"

The Great Migration saw the relocation of an estimated 6 million African Americans out of the rural South between 1915 and 1970. Thanks to housing inequalities, Chicago and Detroit were two key destinations for migrant families. But racism and systemic social injustices created powerful activism among African Americans instrumental to the rise of the Civil Rights Movement. Contemporary Midwesterners continue to fight against racial inequity, most notably through their participation in the Black Lives Matter Movement. Ball State University alumna, Chantel Thomas, gave voice to the ongoing struggle in the video to 2021 Grammy Song of the Year, "I Can't Breathe," which she co-wrote with the song's performer, H.E.R.

Ball State alumna,  
Chantel Thomas  
co-wrote the  
Grammy Song of  
the Year 2021,  
"I Can't Breathe."  
Source:  
Sentise WEBB



*"Trying times all the time  
Destruction of minds, bodies, and human rights  
Stripped of bloodlines, whipped and confined  
This is the American pride"*

*It's justifying a genocide  
Romanticizing the theft and bloodshed  
That made America the land of the free  
To take a black life, land of the free"*

*To bring a gun to a peaceful fight for civil rights  
You are desensitized to pulling triggers on innocent lives  
Because that's how we got here in the first place."*

*"I Can't Breathe" lyrics*



# Native American Experiences: Revitalizing Their Culture



Descendants of the Midwest's  
first people are bringing  
new life to their  
once forbidden cultures.

### EEMAMWICKI "They Awaken"

Tung Pu, a member of the Myanma Tribe, is making a counter-cultural effort. He is one of the first to have been educated in his own language. His challenges are to speak Myanma to everyone and to work to create his own language that depends on using the Myanma Dictionary and the Roman alphabet system. Myanma is what is known as a tonal language, though some of the other Myanma people in India and Ethiopia are not. The Myanma tribe in Myanmar University during the 1950s was the Myanma Tribe of Oldham as known as Ethel University. Professor. Officer and Community Program Manager from the Cultural Resources Program Office (CSTO) located in Pu (Myanma). Second place, community.



above: Lacrosse game at Summer Gathering  
across the top: Stomp Dance at Winter Gathering. Photos by Doug Pacorus

meets where neighbors can explore their culture together. They hold seasonal gatherings where they share traditional Winter Stories and play games such as *hacosse* and, Doug Petrucci's daughter's favorite, the board game.

When asked what message he wanted to share with fellow African-Americans, the answer was simple: "We're all here."

## INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOLS



Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School  
Sources: Clarke Historical Library

In the 1800s-1900s, Americans of European descent attempted to eradicate all Native American cultures. Indian removal efforts separated communities and Indian boarding schools were used to obliterate, forcing them to adopt white European culture and think even punishment. School officials took children from their families, stole their personal belongings, and "cleaned" the children with kerosene, alcohol, and poisons.

Children also lead physical punishment. To make language use or for holding their hair grow too long, for some rebelling, child laborers construct school buildings and amenities. In the worst situations, children died from a combination of malnutrition and disease. The events of these schools are still felt today through language, traditional rituals and the backdrop of tribal social structures.

*"Kill the Indian, save the man."*

Brigadier General  
Richard Pratt, founder  
of the first Indian  
boarding school



Source: [www.stmartinchicago.org](http://www.stmartinchicago.org)

"The fear of judgment by God and family are among the most powerful forces keeping LGBTQ heartlanders silent and in the closet," write Ryan Schussler and Kevin Whitener, Jr. in their recent anthology about LGBTQ+ in the Midwest. Saint Martin's Episcopal Church of Chicago was founded in 1878, and before the 1990s was a predominantly white parish. The surrounding neighborhood began to transition from white to Black in the 1970s, and as white parishioners left for the suburbs, church membership dwindled. By the mid-2000s, it was ready to close. Some saw opportunity in St. Martin's, particularly Juan Read, who assumed the role of pastor in 1998 and went to work refashioning the parish as a Black-affirming LGBTQ+ affirming place of worship.

Now led by Father Christopher Griffin, St. Martin's is a thriving, multiracial parish that strives to affirm many different types of families, proudly incorporating a rainbow dove into its logo and working to "intentionally incorporate LGBTQ+ individuals and families in our congregational life." The church draws many people who have been alienated from traditional churches from across the Chicagoland area. St. Martin's is just one example of safe spaces created by and for LGBTQ+ people in the Midwest, and at the intersections of race and class.

Reverend Christopher E. Griffin,  
Worship at St. Martin's Episcopal  
Church of Chicago

St. Martin's is just one example of safe spaces for LGBTQ+ individuals in the Midwest. Longstanding safe spaces include the Mark III Tap Room in Muncie, Indiana, the oldest gay bar in Indiana, and Irene's Cabaret, a gay bar in Quincy, Illinois that opened its doors in 1980. Other LGBTQ+ individuals have created sober gathering places, such as Queer Chocolate here in Muncie, Indiana, to provide support for LGBTQ+ young people. These spaces, along with many elsewhere in the Midwest, exist to provide sanctuary and fellowship for LGBTQ+ people.

*"Not only do  
LGBTQ people  
belong in the  
heartland,  
but also they have  
long created safe  
spaces for each  
other, developing  
alternative forms  
of kinship."*

Doug Kiel,  
foreword to  
*Sweeter Voices Still:  
An LGBTQ+ Anthology  
of Middle America*

# Queer Spaces: LGBTQ+ People Are Reclaiming and Creating Safe Spaces in the Midwest

# Refugees Give Back: Refugees Make the Midwest a Diverse and Unique Space

## WHAT IS A REFUGEE?

A refugee is a person who, "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion," has crossed an international border and does not have access to the protection of their native country (1951 Convention in relation to the Status of Refugees).

## REFUGEES IN THE MIDWEST

The Midwest plays a key role in offering a safe home for displaced refugees. Chicago, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Detroit, Lansing, and Cleveland have some of the largest percentages of refugees in the region.

## HOW IS A REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT SITE ESTABLISHED?

In order for a community to be established as a refugee resettlement site, there must be jobs available and community support, including people who will donate time and money to help refugees adjust.

## REFUGEES TO THE MIDWEST, WINTER 2021

ILLINOIS 99	NEBRASKA 33
WISCONSIN 69	INDIANA 31
OHIO 65	KANSAS 20
IOWA 44	MISSOURI 19
MINNESOTA 40	SOUTH DAKOTA 7
MICHIGAN 33	NORTH DAKOTA 4

# REFUGEES GIVE BACK



AWAKEN served Afghan food at Living Lights, a resource fair for sustainable lifestyles of Minnetonka in Minnetonka, Indiana. All proceeds went towards AWAKEN's efforts to provide education, educational skills, and healthcare to women and children around Afghanistan. Bibi Bala and her husband, Sabir Bala, are pictured above. Photo courtesy of Bibi Bala.

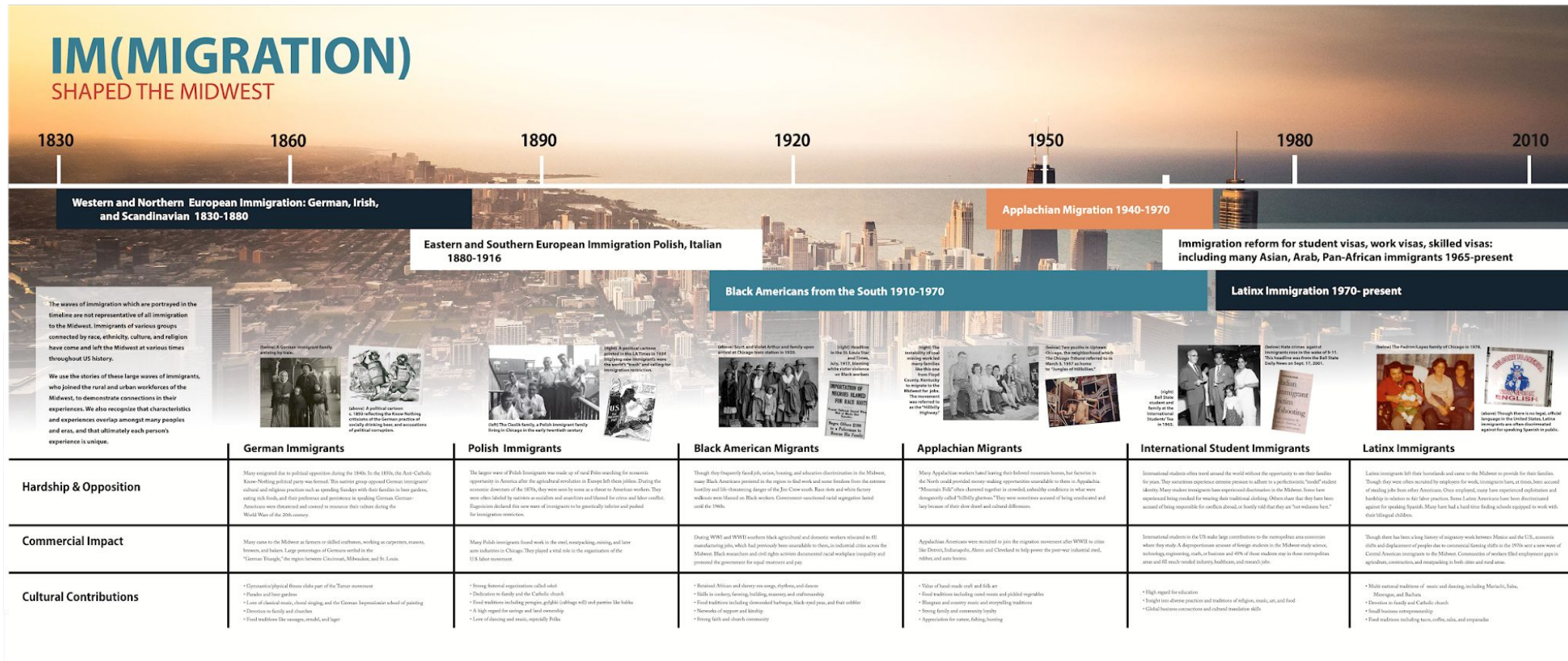
## Afghan refugee makes a home in the Midwest and establishes a relief organization

When Bibi Bala was 11 years old, the Soviet Afghan War began, and she fled Afghanistan with her family. In 1986, they found a new home in Minnetonka, Indiana, where Bibi later went on to pursue education at Ball State University while raising six children. Bibi has put down deep roots in the Midwest and now strives to help others. In 2002, Bibi founded AWAKEN, a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the lives of women and children living in impoverished places in Afghanistan by providing them with educational programs, vocational opportunities, health care services, and sanitation and hygiene.

Refugees coming to the Midwest face many obstacles on the journey to safety but have persevered thanks to their resilience and willingness to embrace new opportunities. Refugees contribute significantly to the economies of their new home states through entrepreneurship and employment. Their relocation to many Midwestern regions that have been suffering from a population decline has led to successes of revitalization. Midwestern refugees enrich the cultural mosaic of the Midwest, making it a more diverse region.



# This is the Midwest: Immigrant Stories and Futures



## Ethnic Ancestry of today's Midwesterners

According to the 2010 US Census Midwest Region

26.2% German, 17.7 Million  
11.9% Irish, 8.03 Million  
10.4% African American, 7.01 Million  
7.4% English, 5.02 Million  
7.3% Hispanic, 4.96 Million  
5.4% Scandinavian, 3.63 Million  
5.1% Polish, 3.42 Million  
2.9% Asian, 1.99 Million  
.7% Arab, 458,000

22.7% Other or unclassified

MIDWESTERN Stories

For additional resources about immigration in the Midwest visit [www.midwesternstories.com](http://www.midwesternstories.com)